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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: OBAMA'S INAUGURATION, HILLARY CLINTON'S
NOMINATION

¶1. Summary: Taiwan's major Chinese-language dailies focused their January 17-20 news coverage on the Taiwan government's distribution of consumption vouchers Sunday, a move aimed at stimulating Taiwan's economy; on the first of three pre-trial hearings on former President Chen Shui-bian's legal cases; and on U.S. President Barack Obama's inauguration Tuesday.

¶2. In terms of editorials and commentaries, an editorial in the pro-independence "Liberty Times" praised U.S. President Obama's recent speeches, in which he mentioned American values of independence and democracy, and lamented Taiwan President Ma Ying-jeou and his foreign policy. An op-ed piece in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" spelled out the challenges facing the Obama Administration and said both Obama's and Secretary of State-designee Hillary Clinton's attitude toward Beijing is friendly but overly naive. An editorial in the pro-unification "United Daily News" commented on the implication of Obama's inauguration, saying it fulfills former U.S. President Abraham Lincoln's "dream of equality" in U.S. society. The editorial expressed strong optimism on Obama's coming into office in the midst of challenges domestically and internationally. A column in the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times," on the other hand, discussed Obama's team and said he is daring enough to hire outstanding rivals as his team members. An editorial in the conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" also expressed optimism and high expectations for Obama assuming office, calling him a hope not only for the United States but also for all of Asia. An editorial in the pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" urged Obama "to reject both Bush's unilateralism and Hu's arrogance and back the need for a 'democratic solution' in the Taiwan Strait. ..." A separate "Taiwan News" editorial said that, while Obama will refocus U.S. policy on "responsibility" and multilateralism, which is different from that of his predecessor George W. Bush, the Ma Ying-jeou Administration must reassess its strategic positioning and future policy direction in U.S.-China-Taiwan relations. A separate "China Post" editorial discussed the nomination of Hillary Clinton as Secretary of State and praised her for being "the right person at the right time." End summary.

¶3. Obama's Inauguration

A) "Look at Barack Obama's High-spirited Enthusiasm! Wonder Where Taiwan's Leader Is?"

The pro-independence "Liberty Times" [circulation: 700,000] editorialized (1/20):

"... Shouldering high expectations of the American people for novelty and for change, U.S. President-elect Barack Obama is about to assume office as the United States' 44th president today. As the first African-American head of state born on this new continent in the course of the past 220 years, [Obama] has announced constantly over the past few days that he will follow the spirit of the nation's founding fathers and lead the American people to walk into a new era. The values upheld by Obama were nothing but independence

and democracy, the two most important pillars that support the Obama era. The same two pillars, which also provide core inspiration for Taiwan to promote new relations with the United States, are indeed ringing words which warn people against lurking danger. ...

"Taiwan and the United States have long shared a common language of democracy, and they also share common interests in the Asia-Pacific region. With the Bush regime coming to an end, whatever ambiance that existed between Taiwan and the United States over the past eight years has already become transient like clouds and mist passing before the eyes. When he assumed office, Ma Ying-jeou announced to all the Taiwan people that he would strengthen cooperative ties with the United States, a security ally and trade partner. He really should no longer shirk responsibility using [the excuse of] 'Taiwan suffering unprecedented damage in its international support'. With Obama rising to power, personnel reshuffling will be in process in the new U.S. administration. Even though it is generally expected that Washington's Asia policy direction will not change much under the fixed framework, there have been reports saying that many people who are friendly with Taiwan will be invited to hold major positions in the new administration. The trend has also created ample room for imagination for Taiwan to advance and strengthen its relations with the United States. ..."

B) "The First One Hundred Days of Barack Obama"

Former National Security Council Deputy Secretary-General Parris Chang opined in the mass-circulation "Apple Daily" [circulation: 520,000] (1/20):

"... The attitude of Barack Obama and Hillary Clinton toward Beijing is basically friendly but overly naive. Clinton believes that U.S.-China relations will be the most important bilateral NOMINATION

relationship in the world for this century, and she emphasizes intimate cooperation between the two countries. ... Over the past few years, many U.S. defense secretaries have constantly questioned the real motive behind China's strong efforts to push for military expansion and modernization. They also expressed doubt about China's constant increase in its defense budget and lack of transparency in its military policy. Due to such factors, the United States has had to adopt a strategy of 'making a double bet,' sending six carrier battle groups and three seconds of its nuclear submarines to deploy in the Pacific area (with Guam as a base) to prevent and deter China from using force against Taiwan and other countries. It remains to be seen whether the new national security team under Obama will be able to tell friend from foe, seize its opportunity and welcome new challenges."

C) "Obama's Inauguration: Today Is Lincoln's Big Day!"

The pro-unification "United Daily News" [circulation: 400,000] editorialized (1/20):

"... Indeed, the United States nowadays needs a president with a better imagination. In the last few decades, with an attitude that took for granted that 'the United States President is the leader of the world,' the United States acted unilaterally with its hegemonic intuition and ignored the feelings of other countries. Especially, during the term of Bush Junior [George W. Bush], the spirit of unilateralism and realism were brought into full play. Therefore, after eight years, the United States faces hostility because of its invasion [of other countries]; [and the United States] brought financial disaster to the world because of its loose management [of financial markets], both of which made Washington become a negative example that the whole world looked askance at it. Such arrogant and self-centered thinking indeed requires a leader like [United States President-elect Barack] Obama, whose political experience is not abundant, who espouses certain ideals and yet is not naive, [in order] to have an opportunity to revamp thoroughly. ..."

D) "Barack Obama Daring Enough to Hire Outstanding Rivals [for His Team]"

Deputy Editor-in-Chief Kuo Chen-lung wrote in the "International Column" of the centrist, KMT-leaning "China Times" [circulation: 150,000] (1/20):

"... The United States has just been awakened by surprise from the nightmare of Iraq, so it seems unlikely that the Obama Administration will jump into another unworthy war again. But many people are now worried that the financial and economic team under Obama will have problems figuring out how to steer correctly, and that they might use erroneous means and fall into another financial or economic trap. Among Obama's financial and economic team, its chief, Lawrence Summers and Treasury Secretary-designate Timothy Geithner are the ones who people are most worried about. ..."

E) "Obama Is Also Asia's Hope"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (1/20):

"... President Obama's rise to high office reads something like a fairy tale and is the most powerful proof of the triumph of the American Dream. ... President Obama represents a new, 21st century America. He is white and black and even a bit Asian. He is a Christian with a Buddhist stepsister who also had two Muslim fathers. He has relatives in Africa and Asia as well as distant European ancestors. And, while he chose to identify himself as a black man in college, he was actually raised by his white maternal grandparents. In short, Obama is a little bit of everything, just like America herself. President Obama will spend his first full day in the White House, a palace largely built by African slaves. The symbolism of Obama's electoral victory has not been lost on the world and many view him as the embodiment of hope.

"All across the planet, people are eagerly hoping that the positive change in direction Obama has promised will bring the United States, and by extension, the entire globe, back from the edge of peril. It's a lot for one man to shoulder, even if he is Barack Obama. The world has changed over the past 30 years. China is now the world's third largest economy and from the looks of it, this century is shaping up to be dominated by Asian power players. Having a U.S. President who understands Asia and Asians on an intimate basis is a positive development for the whole world. Many here in Asia welcome the arrival of a man with such close links to the region and hope that his presidency will help draw America closer to the planet's most populated, vibrant and colorful continent. So, welcome to your new job, President Obama. We here in Asia are rooting for you."

F) "Advice from Taiwan for President Obama"
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The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (1/19):

"Tomorrow, the Democratic Party's Barack Obama will be inaugurated as the 44th president of the United States and the first African-American citizen to hold that honor and burden. We sincerely hope President Obama can fulfill his promises to forge long-belated changes needed by the people of the U.S. and the world and especially reincorporate the values of human rights and the needs of the globe's disadvantaged into U.S. foreign policy. ... In light of future U.S. policy toward Taiwan, we also urge President Obama and his foreign policy team to appreciate the importance of our democratic island nation and handle its policy toward our relations with the authoritarian People's Republic of China with more caution and 'smartness.' It is likely that the Obama administration will 'say and do less' with regard to the Taiwan Strait during its first months as Washington will be preoccupied with other urgent 'hot potatoes' and will welcome the apparent cross-strait rapprochement under the Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) government of President Ma Ying-jeou and may try to avoid 'taking sides.'

"Such a passive stance will do more harm than good to both the prospects for lasting stability and peace in the Taiwan Strait and for the very survival of Taiwan's democracy largely because it overlooks potential uncertainties embedded with the nature of the current so-called 'reconciliation' process which, unfortunately, is taking place on a stage primarily constructed and controlled by the PRC. ... We strongly suggest the Ma administration not to rush to issue a unilateral reaction to Hu's six-point political trap but use

greater patience and engage in consultations with the new U.S. administration as well as engage in serious dialogue with the DPP and the rest of Taiwan society.

"For its part, the Obama administration should also appreciate the deep mistrust in Taiwan society over the hasty and unilateral drive for cross-strait 'reconciliation' launched by the Ma regime on Beijing's terms and over the KMT-CCP platform which monopolizes political talks but lies outside any democratic monitoring. ...

"Some U.S. foreign policy experts advise the Obama administration to adopt a stance of 'strategic ambiguity' and 'say and do less' on Taiwan on the grounds that Washington needs the PRC's cooperation on international security and economic affairs and to avoid following in the footsteps of the Bush administration which allegedly sent 'wrong signals' that indirectly encouraged former president Chen Shui-bian to 'push the envelope' for formal Taiwan independence. Such misguided positions are a flawed solution to 'yesterday's problem' and neglect the costs today of the Bush administration's support for a 'regime change' in Taiwan that brought back to power a pro-China and quasi-authoritarian party whose unilateral willingness to accept Beijing's terms threatens the survival of one of Asia's democratic success stories and may sow the seeds of greater tragedy and conflict. Instead, we urge President Obama to reject both Bush's unilateralism and Hu's arrogance and back a the need for a 'democratic solution' in the Taiwan Strait that can both secure lasting peace and prevent a rollback of democracy and human rights in Taiwan and the East Asian region."

G) "Time for Ma to Clarify Taiwan's Direction"

The pro-independence, English-language "Taiwan News" [circulation: 20,000] editorialized (1/20):

"Today's inauguration of United States President Barack Obama of the Democratic Party will attract intense attention from around the world since there are high expectations that his inaugural speech will indicate the direction of a change in U.S. policy from eight years of American unilateralism and free market fundamentalism under the outgoing right-wing Republican administration of George W. Bush.

In terms of external relations, Obama should enunciate his intention to refocus U.S. policy on 'responsibility' and to move forward to coping worldwide crises in finance and climate change, dealing with the disastrous legacy of Bush's war in Iraq, and repair America's tattered image as a protector of democracy and human rights.

"Besides reviving domestic public confidence, Obama is also likely to renew the U.S. commitment to multilateral cooperation with democratic allies and continue to 'constructively but not uncritically engage' the People Republic of China to bring Beijing more firmly into multilateral rules-based institutions that guarantee global stability. ... U.S. policy makers under Bush were by no means fully supportive of Taiwan's democratic deepening since they wrongly perceived these efforts under the former Democratic Progressive Party government of ex-president Chen Shui-bian mostly as a drive for 'formal independence' that could 'provoke' Beijing, NOMINATION

which Bush administration relied upon for cooperation in its 'war against terror.' Hence, senior U.S. officials issued scarcely veiled hints of favoring the DPP's replacement by the right-wing Chinese Nationalist Party (Kuomintang) government under President Ma Ying-jeou, whose assumption of power in May has been followed by a rapid liberalization of cross-strait exchanges.

"However, Ma's unilateral concessions on Taiwan's status and his government's overt tilt toward Beijing are now beginning to worry some U.S. security and intelligence strategists, while the snowballing signs of rollbacks in Taiwan's civic, judicial and other human rights under the one-party dominant KMT regime have sparked intense concern from U.S. based human rights organization. Obama's new Democratic administration will inevitably introduce a markedly different atmosphere from the neo-conservative Bush era and merits a reassessment by Ma of his KMT government strategic positioning and future policy directions. ... Ma needs to show in actions and not simply words whether his government will preserve Taiwan's existing democratic independence or regress toward authoritarianism under a

Chinese umbrella. If the KMT regime refuses to protect our democracy, the Taiwan people will save it themselves."

14. Hillary Clinton's Nomination

"Secretary of State Clinton Is 'Right Person at Right Time'"

The conservative, pro-unification, English-language "China Post" [circulation: 30,000] editorialized (1/17):

"It may sound like an effusive praise, but Senator Chuck Schumer's description of fellow colleague Hillary Rodham Clinton, president-elect Barack Obama's nominee for U.S. Secretary of State, as the 'right person at the right time' was not over the top. ... Mrs. Clinton, who will be 62 in October, proved that she deserved every word of the accolade. In her statement before the panel, she delivered a comprehensive and impressive account of the challenges facing the world and her ways to deal with them. She promised a return to a foreign policy 'based on principles and pragmatism, not rigid ideology; on facts and evidence, not emotion and prejudice.'

"After eight years of George Bush's unilateralism that has alienated America's allies and emboldened its enemies, Mrs. Clinton's words were refreshing and encouraging. Mrs. Clinton, a Yale-educated lawyer and tenacious political fighter, showed her mastery of most foreign issues, from Gaza to climate change, from nonproliferation to China's rise. Also, she forswore 'petty turf wars,' a reference to the power struggle inside Foggy Bottom. Yes, the job is cut out for her. This famous 'work horse' will put her energy and talents to good use, trying to bring peace to the killing fields in the Middle East, defuse the nuclear crisis in Iran and North Korea, and eradicate poverty and diseases. She is a born diplomat and Obama demonstrated tremendous foresight in giving her the all-important position despite their long, bloody fight during the campaign."

YOUNG